

Jordan Lake Rules Information

History

The B. Everett Jordan Lake was built by the US Army Corps of Engineers in 1983 in the Cape Fear River Basin in Apex, NC. Jordan Lake has been a recreational site and source of drinking water for the area. However, the lake has consistently had excessive nutrients, such as nitrogen and phosphorus. These nutrients come from agricultural fields, urban areas, and discharges from municipal wastewater treatment plants. These excess nutrients cause algae blooms and fish kills and make the water unsafe for drinking and recreational use.

In 2002, the North Carolina Division of Water Quality (NCDWQ) officially determined that Jordan Lake has too many nutrients. City of Greensboro staff spent several years working with DWQ and others to develop a strategy for Jordan Lake that would improve water quality in a cost-effective manner; however, these efforts have been unsuccessful.

The City of Greensboro now urges political and public support to ensure that the proposed rules are revised to be fair, reasonable, and result in improved water quality.

City of Greensboro's Primary Concerns About the Jordan Lake Rules

1. The rules are unfair and expensive with questionable results

The majority of nutrients entering Jordan Lake come from agricultural runoff; however, the majority of the cost to reduce these nutrients will come from cities and counties. These costs are estimated at \$1 billion and include:

- Technology upgrades at wastewater treatment plants (\$207,000,000)
- Additional requirements for new development and redevelopment (\$18,713,000)
- New programs to address urban runoff (\$528,000,000)
- New requirements to address pollution from roads (\$616,000,000)

While the proposed rules are expensive and place a large burden on cities and counties, the main problem with these recommendations is that they may not improve the water quality in Jordan Lake because **they don't address agriculture**, which is the primary source of the problem.

Recommended action: Ask DWQ to review the pollution compliance targets among the sources to ensure fairness and water quality improvement.

2. No clear way to measure results

Compliance with the proposed rules will be determined by water quality conditions at, or near, the lake; however, this will not determine whether any problems are caused by agricultural/urban runoff, or from discharges from wastewater treatment plants. This means that municipal wastewater and stormwater programs will bear the burden of cost and responsibility for future pollution reduction. **Water, sewer, and stormwater utility rates will need to increase in order to comply with these rules for years to come.**

Recommended action: Ask DWQ to add clear and specific criteria for determining compliance at the local level.

3. Critical designation hurts economic opportunities

DWQ plans to designate the entire Jordan Lake watershed as a critical water-supply watershed. This will result in new land-use based regulations that limit potential economic opportunities for this region. It will increase the cost of new homes and development, may contribute to urban sprawl, and make the region less competitive when recruiting major industries.

Recommended action: Ask that this classification be removed from the rules or revised to be more flexible for cities and counties.

4. Existing Development Rule is too strict

This rule requires that pollution be removed from all developed areas by using various techniques to catch and filter runoff before it reaches a stream. This requirement is more stringent than any other watershed rule in NC and will be very expensive (\$528 million). Water/sewer and stormwater rates could double or triple.

Recommended action: Ask DWQ to remove the existing development rule altogether, or consider establishing the rule statewide.

5. New Development Rule will hurt economic development

The proposed nutrient reduction targets will make any new economic development much more difficult and expensive, and will increase the costs of homes, land, and commercial development. These targets would also place the Triad at a significant economic disadvantage as this region attempts to recruit major businesses and recover from textile and furniture industry losses.

Recommended action: Ask DWQ to set reasonable development reduction targets.

What you can do

Elected officials and the general public are urged to provide comments against the Jordan Lake Rules by September 14, 2007 to the address listed below:

You may also request hard copies of information from or direct questions to:

Rich Gannon or Jason Robinson
DENR-Division of Water Quality, Planning Section
1617 Mail Service Center, Raleigh, NC 27699-1617
Phone (919) 733-5083, ext. 356 or 537, Fax (919) 715-5637
Rich.Gannon@ncmail.net or Jason.T.Robinson@ncmail.net

To learn more

The following information related to the proposed rules is available on the NC DWQ website at:

<http://h2o.enr.state.nc.us/nps/JordanNutrientStrategy.htm>

- Summary of the reservoir's history and the need for and nature of the rules (8 pp)
- Text of the 12 proposed rules (81 pp)
- Fiscal analysis of costs to affected parties (187 pp)
- Links to draft TMDL and related water quality modeling information
- Final Report of 2003-2004 stakeholder goal-setting/conceptual strategy process (38 pp)

Secondary supporting information is also available as follows:

- Related Division of Water Quality rules:
www.ncwaterquality.org/admin/rules/codes_statutes.htm
- Full records of 2003-2004 stakeholder process that set strategy goals and developed a conceptual strategy can be found at the following website by following the path below:
www.tjcog.dst.nc.us/downloads.shtml - jorlkstk